

## Message Text

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FOL REPEAT GENEVA 9345 ACTION SECSTATE DTD NOV 23.

QUOTE

UNCLAS GENEVA 9345

FOR SCHAUFLE FROM WISNER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: RH UK PFOR

SUBJ: BRITAIN'S RHODESIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

THE NOVEMBER 23 FINANCIAL TIMES CARRIED A SECOND  
BRIDGET BLOOM ARTICLE, ENTITLED "BRITAIN'S URGENT  
DILEMMA IN RHODESIA." THE TEXT IS AS FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT

FOR THREE OF ITS FORMAL FOUR WEEKS' EXISTENCE, THE  
GENEVA CONFERENCE ON RHODESIA HAS BEEN DEADLOCKED OVER  
THE OSTENSIBLE ISSUE OF A DATE FOR RHODESIA'S INDEPEND-  
ENCE AS ZIMBABWE. BUT AS MANY PEOPLE ARE NOW BEGINNING TO  
REALISE, THE REAL ISSUE IS MUCH MORE FUNDAMENTAL.  
AS MR. IVOR RICHARD, THE CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN WHO RE-  
TURNED TO GENEVA LAST NIGHT AFTER TALKS WITH BRITISH  
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MINISTERS, HIMSELF ADMITTED, BEHIND THE APPARENTLY FUTILE  
WRANGLINGS OVER TWO OR THREE MONTHS LIE DEEPER DIFFER-  
ENCES BETWEEN THE AFRICANS AND BRITAIN ITSELF.

THESE CENTRE ON BRITAIN'S OWN ROLE, IN THE CONFERENCE ITSELF, AND IN THE INTERIM PERIOD BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. BY HOLDING OUT FOR A FIRM DATE OF INDEPENDENCE WITHIN 12 MONTHS OF THE END OF THE CONFERENCE, MR. JOSHUA NKOMO AND MR. ROBERT MUGABE, THE TWO AFRICAN LEADERS WITH THE MOST MILITANT SUPPORTERS, ARE ESSENTIALLY ATTEMPTING TO COMMIT BRITAIN TO A VERY POSITIVE ROLE, NOW, AND IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. BY REFUSING TO DO WHAT THEY ARE ASKING, MR. RICHARD IS FULFILLING THE MANDATE HE HAS FROM THE CABINET, WHICH IS TO KEEP BRITISH INVOLVEMENT TO A MINIMUM.

WHETHER MR. RICHARD'S MANDATE HAS BEEN CHANGED AS A RESULT OF HIS TALKS YESTERDAY WITH MR. ANTHONY CROSLAND, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY, REMAINS TO BE SEEN. IN ALL PROBABILITY IT HAS NOT. BUT FEW OBSERVERS DOUBT THAT THE QUESTION OF BRITAIN'S ROLE IS NOW CRITICAL.

THERE IS DEEP HOSTILITY IN THE LABOUR PARTY, IN IMPORTANT SECTIONS OF THE CABINET AND, ONE SUSPECTS, IN THE COUNTRY AT LARGE TO BRITAIN ASSUMING ITS ADMITTED IF RESIDUAL COLONIAL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN RHODESIA. THE REASONS ARE NOT HARD TO FIND: THE COLONIAL ERA IS PAST, AND WITH ULSTER AND THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, THERE IS NEITHER THE POLITICAL WILL NOR THE ECONOMIC MEANS FOR AFRICAN OR ANY OTHER FOREIGN ADVENTURES.

NEVERTHELESS, WHETHER OR NOT WE HAVE THE POLITICAL WILL TO GET INVOLVED IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AT THIS STAGE, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE SHOULD KNOW WHAT IS AT STAKE. THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT PROBABLY ONLY BRITAIN AT THIS STAGE HAS THE POTENTIAL POWER TO IMPEL BOTH SIDES IN RHODESIA TOWARDS A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. THERE ARE TWO BASIC REASONS FOR THIS. SUCCESSIVE BRITISH GOVERNMENTS HAVE MAINTAINED OVER THE PAST ELEVEN YEARS THAT THEY HAVE HAD RESPONSIBILITY WITHOUT POWER IN RHODESIA AND THEY HAVE BEEN RIGHT. FOR AS LONG AS THE RHODESIAN PRIME MINISTER,

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MR. IAN SMITH, INSISTED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA IN HIS LIFETIME, BRITAIN, WITHOUT A SINGLE ADMINISTRATOR OR SOLDIER ON THE GROUND, WAS POWERLESS TO DO ANYTHING TO BRING ABOUT MAJORITY RULE, SHORT OF A MILITARY INVASION.

BUT THAT SITUATION CHANGED ON SEPTEMBER 24 THIS YEAR, WHEN MR. SMITH, PUSHED BY DR. KISSINGER AND MR. VORSTER, ACCEPTED MAJORITY RULE IN TWO YEARS. IN HIS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE U.S. SECRETARY AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN PREMIER, MR. SMITH APPARENTLY DECLARED THAT HE WAS BEING ASKED TO SIGN HIS "OWN SUICIDE NOTE." HE CERTAINLY REALISED THAT SEPTEMBER 24 SPELT THE ULTIMATE OF NOT THE ACTUAL ABDI-

CATION OF POWER BY THE WHITES IN RHODESIA, JUST AS HE AND THE REST OF THE WORLD KNOW THAT GENEVA IS ABOUT ITS ASSUMPTION BY THE BLACKS. THESE EVENTS HAVE CREATED A POTENTIAL POWER VACUUM WHICH BRITAIN, BECAUSE OF ITS RESIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES, HAS THE LEGAL RIGHT--IF NOT THE POLITICAL WILL--TO FILL.

#### THIRD PARTY LEADERSHIP

THAT IT NEEDS TO BE FILLED IF THERE IS TO BE A SETTLEMENT IS SEEN FROM THE OTHER MAJOR FACTOR: THERE IS SUCH DEEP DISTRUST BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE POLITICIANS AND OTHERS IN RHODESIA THAT THE TWO SIDES ARE ALMOST CERTAINLY INCAPABLE OF REACHING A SETTLEMENT WITHOUT SOME DETERMINED THIRD PARTY LEADERSHIP.

GENEVA, IF IT HAS DONE NOTHING ELSE, HAS ILLUSTRATED THE DEPTHS OF SUSPICION WHICH THE AFRICANS (NOT WITHOUT REASON IF ONE LOOKS AT THE RECORD OF THE PAST 11 YEARS OF FAILED SETTLEMENTS) FEEL TOWARDS MR. SMITH AND HIS COLLEAGUES. FOR HIS PART, MR. SMITH HAS HARDLY TRIED TO CONCEAL HIS CONTEMPT FOR AFRICAN NATIONALIST POLITICIANS OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS. BOTH SIDES TODAY ARE IN A HIGHLY CHARGED, ALMOST EMOTIONAL STATE: THE WHITES KNOW THAT THEY HAVE LOST, AND ARE FEARFUL OF THEIR FUTURE AND THE BLACKS SCENT VICTORY, BUT ARE STILL UNSURE OF IT. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS IDLE FOR BRITAIN OR ANYONE ELSE TO PRETEND THAT A SETTLEMENT CAN BE NEGOTIATED, LET UNCLASSIFIED

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ALONG MADE TO WORK, WITHOUT STRONG AND DETERMINED THIRD PARTY LEADERSHIP.

ASSUMING THAT THE POLITICAL WILL EXISTED, WHAT SHOULD BRITAIN DO? FIRST ONE MUST DECIDE ON THE AIM. WHATEVER THE GOVERNMENT MAY NOW PRIVATELY FEEL ABOUT THE KISSINGER INITIATIVE IT MUST BE PRESUMED THAT A MAJORITY OF POLITICIANS OF ALL PARTIES SUPPORT ITS GENERAL AIM OF A SETTLEMENT THROUGH NEGOTIATION WHICH WOULD BOTH END THE GUERRILLA WAR AND PEACEFULLY HAND THE COUNTRY OVER TO THE MAJORITY.

OBTAINING HOWEVER THE AFRICANS ARE GOING TO WIN IN THE END, SO BRITAIN MUST BE SEEN CLEARLY ON THEIR SIDE. THIS DOES NOT MEAN ABANDONING THE WHITES, BUT IT MUST MEAN ENCOURAGING THEM TO AGREE TO A SETTLEMENT WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE TO ALL THE AFRICANS AND NOT JUST THE MOST MODERATE.

THERE ARE TWO MAIN ALTERNATIVES BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT, BOTH OF WHICH START FROM THE ASSUMPTION THAT BRITAIN WANTS A SETTLEMENT TO COME OUT OF GENEVA BUT RECOGNISES THAT IT WILL BE REQUIRED TO DO MORE THAN PROVIDE A CONFERENCE

CHAIRMAN AND A SUPER-DIPLOMAT TO SIT ON THE SIDELINES IN SALISBURY AS THE RHODESIANS THEMSELVES TRY TO RUN THEIR INTERIM GOVERNMENT.

BOTH WOULD INVOLVE BRITAIN TAKING ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY IN THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD BETWEEN THE END OF THE CONFERENCE AND FULL INDEPENDENCE OVER DEFENCE, LAW AND ORDER, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND POSSIBLY OVERALL ECONOMIC POLICY. THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE BY THE APPOINTMENT OF A GOVERNOR GENERAL (OR SOME SIMILAR FIGURE UNDER ANOTHER NAME) WHO WOULD HAVE TO HAVE BOTH AN ADMINISTRATIVE AND A MILITARY STAFF.

THE FIRST ALTERNATIVE IS BASED ON THE PREMISE THAT BRITAIN (AND THE OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED) ARE BEING UNREALISTIC IN INSISTING THAT RHODESIA CAN ONLY BECOME INDEPENDENT AFTER IT HAS GONE THROUGH ALL THE PROCESSES TRADITIONAL TO "NORMAL" DECOLONISATION. RHODESIA TODAY, THE ARGUMENT RUNS, IS NOT COMPARABLE TO THE GHANA OR UNCLASSIFIED

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NIGERIA OF 20 YEARS AGO, NOR EVEN TO ZAMBIA OR KENYA IN THE EARLY 1960'S. WITH A FULL-SCALE GUERRILLA WAR, CAN RHODESIA AFFORD THE LUXURY OF A FULL SCALE CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE AND ALMOST CERTAINLY DISRUPTIVE GENERAL ELECTIONS, BEFORE INDEPENDENCE?

#### DANGERS OF DISORDERS

WOULD IT NOT BE BETTER TO CUT OUT SOME OF THESE PROCESSES AND SHORTEN THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION, THUS REDUCING TO A MINIMUM THE DANGERS OF DISORDER AND (AND INCIDENTALLY THE DANGERS OF LONG DRAWN OUT BRITISH INVOLVEMENT)? THE DISADVANTAGES OF THIS SORT OF SOLUTION ARE OF COURSE THAT BRITAIN WOULD HAVE TO DISPENSE WITH ELECTIONS (PERHAPS ON THE "PROMISE" THAT THEY TOOK PLACE AFTER INDEPENDENCE) AND WOULD, GIVEN THE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE AFRICAN NATIONALISTS, HAVE TO SO ARRANGE THE PRESENT CONFERENCE THAT THE "RIGHT" PEOPLE CAME OUT ON TOP (THE CRITERIA BEING AN ABILITY TO END THE WAR AND THEN PROVIDE FIRM GOVERNMENT). THIS COULD WELL BE THE MOST PRAGMATIC COURSE, AND THE CYNICAL MIGHT ARGUE THAT WERE THE FRENCH IN OUR POSITION, THEY MIGHT DO JUST THAT. BUT IT IS NOT A COURSE LIKELY TO COMMEND ITSELF IN WESTMINSTER.

THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE THEREFORE IS TO CONTINUE ALONG THE PRESENT PATH, WITH PROVISION MADE FOR ALL THE DUE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES, INCLUDING AN ELECTION BEFORE FULL INDEPENDENCE IS GRANTED.

BUT IF EITHER OF THESE COURSES WERE TO BE PURSUED, THE CENTRAL PROBLEMS WOULD BE THE SAME. THESE, AS ALL THOSE WHO

OPPOSE BRITISH INVOLVEMENT ARE FULLY AWARE, CONCERN WHAT HAPPENS IN THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD TO DEFENCE, AND LAW AND ORDER. THE MISTRUST BETWEEN THE RACES IS DEEPEST HERE--NOT FOR NOTHING DID IAN SMITH, AS A CONDITION OF "SELLING MAJORITY RULE TO HIS ELECTORATE, INSIST THAT THESE PORTFOLIOS SHOULD BE IN WHITE (AND BY IMPLICATION RHODESIAN FRONT) HANDS. BY THE SAME COUNTER, THE AFRICANS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WILL REJECT ANY PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD LEAVE THE WHITES, AND IN PARTICULAR THE RHODESIAN FRONT, IN CONTROL OF AN UNCHANGED, WHITE COMMANDED UNCLASSIFIED

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ARMY. CLEARLY THE KEY QUESTION, IF ANY SETTLEMENT IS TO BE MADE TO WORK, IS THAT THE SECURITY FORCES --WHETHER ARMY OR POLICE--MUST SOMEHOW BE MADE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. A COMPROMISE MUST BE FOUND BETWEEN THE DEMANDS OF THE WHITES THAT CONTROL REMAINS WITH THEM, AND THE DEMANDS OF THE MOST RADICAL BLACKS THAT THE WHITE FORCES BE IMMEDIATELY DISARMED AND DISBANDED AND THAT A BLACK ARMY--MADE UP FROM THE GUIRILLAS--BE PUT IN THEIR PLACE.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES HERE? IN MANY WAYS THE "BEST SCENARIO" WOULD BE FOR BOTH BLACK AND WHITE FORCES TO BE DISBANDED AND DISARMED, AND FOR SEVERAL BATTALIONS OF BRITISH TROOPS, WITH A FIRM DATE OF DEPARTURE AND A LIMITED PEACE-KEEPING-CUM TRAINING ROLE, TO HOLD THE RING IN THE INTERIM.

THE NEXT BEST--SINCE THAT CAN BE RULED OUT IMMEDIATELY--MIGHT BE FOR A COMPLETELY NEUTRAL, WELL ORGANISED FORCE WHICH WOULD BE ABLE NOT ONLY TO SUPERVISE A CEASEFIRE BUT WOULD ALSO HELP TO REORGANISE BOTH THE PRESENT WHITE CONTROLLED ARMY AND THE GUERILLAS INTO A FORCE ACCEPTABLE TO THE NEW BLACK GOVERNMENT. BUT WHO WOULD FIELD SUCH A FORCE? EVEN WERE IT TO BE ACCEPTED BY BOTH SIDES (AND AFTER THE CONGO THERE IS POWERFUL RESISTANCE TO ANY INTERNATIONAL FORCE FROM BOTH BLACK AND WHITE) IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE UN WOULD OR COULD MOUNT IT. A FORCE FROM THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY WOULD OBVIOUSLY MEET WHITE OBJECTIONS, WHILE EVEN A COMMONWEALTH FORCE, WHICH HAS BEEN MOOTED IN SOME CIRCLES, IS LIKELY TO GIVE RISE TO ENDLESS WRANGLES BETWEEN RHODESIANS THEMSELVES AS TO WHICH COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES (BLACK OR WHITE) SHOULD PARTICIPATE.

THE MOST LIKELY SCENARIO IS IN FACT ONE WHERE BOTH SIDES WOULD AGREE THAT THE ONLY AUTHORITY THEY WOULD TRUST WOULD BE BRITAIN, ALBEIT IN A LIMITED ROLE WITHOUT TROOPS. AGAIN PUTTING ASIDE THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL WILL AT WESTMINSTER, IT IS POSSIBLE TO ENVISAGE AN AGREEMENT WHEREBY A BRITISH APPOINTED GOVERNOR GENERAL WOULD HAVE

OVERALL CONTROL OF DEFENCE AND LAW AND ORDER. HE WOULD  
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WORK THROUGH THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT (IN THE  
TRADITIONAL ROLE OF THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL) IN AN  
ENDEAVOUR TO MAKE ALL DECISIONS AGREED ONES. HE WOULD  
HAVE AT HIS SERVICE TWO OR THREE MILITARY MISSIONS. THE  
RESPONSIBILITY OF ONE OF THESE, ALMOST CERTAINLY ENTIRELY  
BRITISH STAFFED, WOULD BE TO "NEUTRALISE" THE PRESENT  
WHITE ARMY BY PROVIDING BRITISH OFFICERS IN KEY POSTS.  
ANOTHER MISSION, PERHAPS STAFFED MAINLY BY AFRICAN COMMON-  
WEALTH COUNTRIES, WOULD RETRAIN AND REORGANISE THE  
GUERRILLAS INTO THE NUCLEUS OF A NEW ARMY FOR AN INDEPENDENT  
RHODESIA.

EVEN WITH SUCH AN APPARENTLY LIMITED INVOLVEMENT, THERE  
WOULD BE HAIR-RAISING PROBLEMS. THE GOVERNOR GENERAL WOULD  
HAVE NO INDEPENDENT TROOPS AT HIS COMMAND: BY REPLACING  
SELECTED SERVING RHODESIAN OFFICERS WITH BRITISH PERSONNEL,  
HE WOULD BE GAMBLING ON THE LOYALTY OF THE MAJORITY OF  
RHODESIAN SOLDIERS TO THE QUEEN.

THIS IS BY NO MEANS IMPOSSIBLE FOR MOST ARMY OFFICERS ARE  
BRITISH OR BRITISH TRAINED, BUT THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF OTHER  
DANGER POINTS, MOST NOTABLY THAT OF THE CEASEFIRE PERIOD  
ITSELF. ANY AGREEMENT REACHED IN GENEVA WOULD HAVE TO  
HAVE THE STRONGEST BACKING FROM THE FRONTLINE AFRICAN  
PRESIDENTS, WHO ALONE HAVE POWER TO STOP THE GUERRILLAS  
FIGHTING, WHILE THE PROCESS OF NEUTRALISING THE WHITE  
ARMY WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE INSTALLA-  
TION OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, IF ONLY TO ALLAY AFRICAN  
SUSPICIONS.

#### THEORETICALLY LIMITED

NO DOUBT IT IS THE CONTEMPLATION OF THESE AND OTHER PROB-  
LEMS WHICH HAS SET THE FACE OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT FIRMLY  
AGAINST ANY INVOLVEMENT IN RHODESIA. BUT WE SHOULD KNOW  
THAT THE QUESTION OF A THEORETICALLY LIMITED BRITISH IN-  
VOLVEMENT IS AND WILL BE CENTRAL TO A SETTLEMENT IN  
GENEVA, AND THAT IF NONE IS REACHED THERE IT WILL BE AT  
LEAST PARTLY BECAUSE WE WERE UNREADY OR UNWILLING TO GET  
INVOLVED.

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IT MAY BE, AS MR. ROBERT MUGABE SAID IN AN INTERVIEW A  
MONTH AGO, THAT NONE OF THE PARTIES INVOLVED IS YET READY  
FOR A SETTLEMENT. BUT IF THAT IS THE CASE, GENEVA AND  
THE KISSINGER INITIATIVE, WHICH (WITH BRITAIN'S

BACKING) LED TO IT, WILL HAVE PROVED A COSTLY WASTE OF  
TIME.

END TEXT.CATTO

UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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